

***Second Year Report of the Evaluation of the Four-Year-Old Child Development  
Programs Funded through the South Carolina Education Improvement Act***

***William H. Brown and Ellen Potter  
Department of Educational Psychology  
and  
Office of Program Evaluation  
College of Education  
University of South Carolina***

***Presented to the  
South Carolina Education Oversight Committee  
August 2003***

## **I. Introduction**

The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) commissioned personnel in the Office of Program Evaluation, Department of Educational Psychology, College of Education, at the University of South Carolina to conduct a two-year evaluation of state-supported four-year-old child development programs.

During the first year of the evaluation, surveys of teachers and early childhood coordinators in state-supported, four-year-old child development programs were conducted. The purpose of the surveys was to collect initial information about how state-funded four-year-old child development program services are being implemented across South Carolina. A report of the responses to the surveys was presented to the Committee on February 13, 2003, and is available on the EOC web site. During the second year of the evaluation, fifteen preschool classrooms were selected for additional data collection. Classroom observations, as well as telephone interviews with teachers and coordinators, were conducted in order to provide more detailed information on these preschool programs.

## **II. Selection of the Fifteen Programs**

Fifteen school districts from the 85 existing South Carolina districts were selected to participate in the on-site preschool classroom observations and the telephone interviews with early childhood coordinators and four-year-old child development teachers during the spring and summer semesters of the 2002-2003 School Year. We selected the participating programs based on the number of preschool children served by the school district (i.e., large vs. medium vs. small districts) and the three major regions in South Carolina (i.e., Coastal, Midlands, and Upstate Regions). Given the restricted range of large school districts across the state, we selected 5 large school districts other than the large district that participated extensively in preobservation training during the fall of 2002. The remaining 10 medium and small districts were selected randomly from the Coastal, Midlands, and Upstate Regions. Once a school district was selected, the district was sent a letter requesting their assistance in obtaining information on their four-year-old child development program. All 15 selected districts agreed to participate in the classroom observations and the telephone interviews. The early childhood coordinators for each of the 15 school districts selected a teacher and her respective classroom for the observations and interviews. This method of selecting classrooms ensured that a sample of preschools from large, medium, and small sized school districts across the state participated in the field-based observations and telephone interviews.

### **III. Preschool Classroom Observations**

Two contemporary early childhood observational instruments, which were developed at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, were employed during the classroom observations in the 15 selected preschools. The two classroom assessments were the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised Edition (ECERS-R) (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1998) and the Teaching Styles Rating Scales (TSRS) (McWilliam, Zulli, & de Kruif, 1998).

#### **Observer Training, Reliability Observations, and Follow-up Teacher Feedback**

During the fall of 2002, several graduate research assistants received extensive training from Dr. Brown in the use of the ECERS-R and the TSRS observational scales. The training was performed in several preschool classrooms from the four-year-old child development program in the Richland School District Two. The three most accurate trainees were selected to perform the preschool classroom observations during the spring of 2003. Dr. Brown trained the three observers to a criterion of 90% interobserver agreement scores for the ECERS-R and 80% on the TSRS scales before any of the field-based observations were performed. In addition, to assess interobserver agreement during field observations and to estimate the reliability of observations, Dr. Brown accompanied each observer to 1 of their 5 designated preschools and simultaneously and independently completed the ECERS-R and the TSRS protocols. The three "reliability observations" across the three observers yielded high interobserver agreement scores for the ECERS-R and the TSRS. Because both observational instruments were rating scales on a likert-type continuum, interobserver agreement was assessed for both exact agreement and within one scale point agreement. The reliability estimates for the three inter-rater agreement site-visits for the ECERS-R were (a) 81% for exact agreement and 98% for within one scale point agreement; (b) 90% for exact agreement and 95% for within one scale point agreement; and (c) 98% for exact agreement and 100% for within one scale point agreement. The reliability estimates for the three TSRS conducted were (a) 70% for exact agreement and 86% for within one scale point agreement; (b) 65% for exact agreement and 96% for within one scale point agreement; and (c) 50% for exact agreement and 90% for within one scale point agreement. In general, these reliability estimates for the two protocols reflect a high level of observer agreement, particularly on the within one scale point agreement scale, which is often used to determine interobserver agreement on observational rating scales. Following data collection and analysis, Dr. Brown called and discussed individually the field-based observation results with the 15, four-year-old child development teachers who participated in the preschool observations.

The actual scores for the ECERS-R and the TSRS by individual school district are delineated in Appendix A. It should be noted that follow-up, nonparametric statistical analyses of the total and subscale scores for the ECERS-R and the TSRS did not indicate that any systematic differences existed between the scores for the different size school districts (i.e., Large, Medium, and Small) or for the different regions of the state (i.e., Coastal, Midlands, and Upstate). Hence, the ECERS-R and TSRS information is presented descriptively by school district.

### **Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised Edition (ECERS-R)**

The ECERS-R is a contemporary preschool rating scale that can be used by trained observers to examine the quality of preschool programs (e.g., arrangement and organization of classrooms, types and appropriateness of learning activities provided). The ECERS-R protocol consists of 43 items within 7 subscales: (a) Space and Furnishings; (b) Personal Care; (c) Language-Reasoning; (d) Activities; (e) Interaction; (f) Program Structure; and (g) Parents and Staff. The 43 items and 7 subscales yield a total composite score that is an excellent overall indicator of the quality of a preschool program. The ECERS-R scale is a seven-point, likert-type scale that ranges from 1 to 7 with 1 = Inadequate, 3 = Minimal, 5 = Good, and 7 = Excellent. In general, users of the ECERS-R consider preschool services rated at 3 or below to be considered of "low quality," those services that are rated between 3 and less than 5 to be of "medium quality," and those services that are rated 5 and above and up to 7 to be of "high quality" or "developmentally appropriate." The ECERS-R is a psychometrically sound preschool protocol for assessing the developmental appropriateness of preschool environments and has been used in many large-scale national studies of childcare and preschool programs. For example, ECERS was a primary measure used to assess the quality of child care in the Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers, a recent national study of child care (Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2000).

### **ECERS-R Results**

The results of the ECERS-R observations in the 15 preschools across the state will be discussed by the 7 subscales and then by the total scale score.

**ECERS-R Subscale 1 - Space and Furnishings Subscale.** This dimension of the ECERS-R assesses the quality of the physical environment provided for young children (e.g., indoor and outdoor space and equipment, furnishings for routine care, play, and learning). On this subscale, the preschool programs mean subscale scores ranged from a low of 4.12 to a high of 6.87 and their median subscale scores ranged from a low of 4.00 to a high of 7.00. Based on

the mean subscale scores, which is the most conservative method of judging quality, 11 of the 15 preschools rated in the high quality and developmentally appropriate range for this subscale.

**ECERS-R Subscale 2 - Personal Care Routines Subscale.** This dimension of the ECERS-R evaluates the quality of personal care for children (e.g., greetings and departures, meals, health and safety practices). On this subscale, the preschool programs mean subscale scores ranged from a low of 5.00 to a high of 7.00 and their median subscale scores ranged from a low of 5.00 to a high of 7.00. Based on the mean subscale scores, all 15 preschools scored in the high quality and developmentally appropriate range for this subscale.

**ECERS-R Subscale 3 - Language Reasoning Subscale.** This dimension of the ECERS-R assesses the quality of the preschool in supporting young children's language use and emergent literacy (e.g., exposure to and use of books, encouraging child communication, using language to develop reasoning skills). On this subscale, the preschool programs mean subscale scores ranged from a low of 5.75 to a high of 7.00 and their median subscale scores ranged from a low of 6.00 to a high of 7.00. All 15 preschools scored in the high quality and developmentally appropriate range for this subscale.

**ECERS-R Subscale 4 - Activities Subscale.** This dimension of the ECERS-R evaluates the quality of the preschool learning activities made available to support children's active engagement and learning (e.g., fine motor, art, blocks, dramatic play, nature/science, math/number). On this subscale, the preschool programs mean subscale scores ranged from a low of 3.80 to a high of 6.80 and their median subscale scores ranged from a low of 4.00 to a high of 7.00. Based on the mean subscale scores, four preschools scored in the high quality and developmentally appropriate range for this subscale. It should be noted, however, that the subscale scores were lower on this dimension because most of the 15 preschool programs did not meet the ECERS-R standard for having learning centers available for "a substantial portion of the day." This standard requires that preschool schedules have at least one third of the time children are in attendance in attendance devoted to center time activities and many child development programs did not meet this specific benchmark.

**ECERS-R Subscale 5 - Interaction Subscale.** This dimension of the ECERS-R assesses the quality of teacher-child, child-child, and teacher-teacher interactions (e.g., supervision of gross motor activities, discipline, interactions among children, teacher-child interactions). On this subscale, the preschool programs mean subscale scores ranged from a low of 6.40 to a high of 7.00 and their median subscale score was 7.00. Based on the mean subscale scores, all 15

preschools scored in the very high quality and developmentally appropriate range for this subscale.

**ECERS-R Subscale 6 - Program Structure Subscale.** This dimension of the ECERS-R evaluates the quality of the preschool program with respect to how play and learning activities are scheduled and how small and large group learning activities are performed. On this subscale, the preschool programs mean subscale scores ranged from a low of 4.50 to a high of 6.93 and their median subscale scores ranged from a low of 4.50 to a high of 7.00. Based on the mean subscale scores, 14 of the 15 preschools scored in the high quality and developmentally appropriate range for this subscale.

**ECERS-R Subscale 7 - Parents and Staff Subscale.** This dimension of the ECERS-R assesses the quality of the preschool program with respect to provisions made available for parents and educational professionals (e.g., provisions for parents informational needs, involvement of parents in the preschool program, provisions for teachers' and other staff members' personal and professional needs, interactions among professionals, supervision and evaluation of professionals). On this subscale, the preschool programs mean subscale scores ranged from a low of 4.50 to a high of 7.00 and their median subscale scores ranged from a low of 4.00 to a high of 7.00. Based on the mean subscale scores, 14 of the 15 preschools scored in the high quality and developmentally appropriate range for this subscale.

**ECERS-R Total Scale Scores.** The total scale score for the ECERS-R provides an excellent overall index of the quality of a preschool program and the composite score is often an indicator used as one of the primary ratings for judging the general quality of a preschool program. On the total scale scores, the preschool programs mean subscale scores ranged from a low of 4.93 to a high of 6.75 and their median subscale scores ranged from a low of 4.50 to a high of 7.00. Based on the mean scale scores, 14 of the 15 preschools scored in the high quality and developmentally appropriate range for the total scale score.

**Summary of ECERS-R Ratings.** Overall the ECERS-R ratings obtained during field-based observations indicated that 14 of the 15 preschools sampled scored in the high quality and developmentally appropriate range of preschool educational services. Moreover, the other preschool program was very close to a high quality rating with a total scale score of 4.93. As a general guide, it might be helpful to note that in a recent, large scale national study of child care programs that the average ECERS total score was 4.26 with 11% of the programs having a low quality rating (i.e., < 3), 65% of the programs having a medium quality rating (i.e., 3 up to < 5), and 24% the programs having a high quality rating (i.e., 5 and above up to 7) (Peisner-Feinberg

et al., 2000). Across all 15 preschool programs, relative strengths were shown in the dimensions of Personal Care, Language-Reasoning, Interaction, Program Structure, and Parents and Staff. On the other hand, relative weaknesses were indicated in the dimensions of Space and Furnishings and Activities. In the specific case of Space and Furnishings, teachers reported that they were not satisfied with their school facilities, particularly their playgrounds, and that they wanted to spend improvement monies on up-grading facilities. For the Activities subscale scores, the lower scores obtained were most often a result of preschool programs failing to meet the ECERS-R standard of making a variety of preschool learning activities and centers available for "a substantial portion of the day" (i.e., one third of the preschool day). Both half-day and full-day programs sampled had this problem with the "substantial portion of the day" standard and many teachers readily acknowledged that it was difficult with the many requirements of their schedules.

### **Teaching Styles Rating Scales (TSRS) Results**

The TSRS is a contemporary preschool rating scale that can be used by trained observers to examine the instructional and affective characteristics of early childhood teachers. The TSRS consists of 20 items for two subscales, Teaching Behaviors and Affect. The Teaching Behavior dimension with a 1 to 7 likert-type rating scale allows raters to assess 7 teaching behaviors including: (a) redirects; (b) introduces; (c) elaborates; (d) follows; (e) informs; (f) acknowledges; and (g) praises. The TSRS Teaching Behavior subscale is a seven-point, likert-type subscale that ranges from 1 to 7 with 1 = Never, 3 = Occasionally, 5 = Often, and 7 Most of the Time. In addition, the Affect subscale with a 1 to 5 likert-type rating scale allows raters to evaluate 13 affective attributes of teachers including: (a) activity level; (b) positive expression; (c) negative expression; (d) visual involvement; (e) physical involvement; (f) emotional responsiveness; (g) consistency of interactions; (h) responsiveness to child interests, (i) child-directedness; (j) tone; (k) inclusion in activities; (l) teaching specific skills; and (m) developmental appropriateness. The TSRS Affect subscale is a five-point, likert-type scale that ranges from 1 to 5 with 1 = Never, 2 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, and 5 = Most of the Time. The items within the Teaching Behavior and Affect subscales are averaged to yield two separate subscale scores, one for the Teaching Behavior subscale and one for the Affect subscale.

It should be noted that the TSRS is a much newer instrument than the ECERS-R and consequently has been used much less often in research and evaluation projects. Nevertheless, the scale has demonstrated reasonable psychometric properties and because of its focus on the teachers' behavior was chosen to supplement the ECERS-R information. The results for the

TSRS observations from the 15 preschools are discussed by the two subscales. The actual subscale scores are delineated in Appendix A.

**TSRS Subscale 1 - Teaching Behavior.** This dimension of the TSRS assesses teachers' instructional behavior with children within the preschool during center time activities. On this seven-point, likert-type subscale, the preschool programs mean subscale scores ranged from a low of 3.28 to a high of 4.85 and their median subscale scores ranged from a low of 4.00 to a high of 6.00. Based on the mean subscale scores, all 15 preschools rated in medium range of the subscale score.

**TSRS Subscale 2 – Affect.** This dimension of the TSRS assesses the teachers' affective attributes within their preschool during center time activities. On this five-point, likert-type subscale, the preschool programs mean subscale scores ranged from a low of 4.15 to a high of 4.92 and their median subscale scores ranged from a low of 4.00 to a high of 5.00. Based on the mean subscale scores, all 15 preschools rated in high range of the subscale score.

**Summary of TSRS Ratings.** The ratings on the TSRS subscales indicated that during an intensive, 15-minute observation focused on teachers during children's center time activities that teachers rated in the medium range for the 7 instructional behaviors whereas they rated in the high range for the 13 teacher affective characteristics. Hence, although the teachers' affective characteristics were rated in the very high range, their actual exhibition of 7 instructional behaviors, at least during this observation during center time activities, was relatively lower and in the medium range. Taken together these findings may indicate that teachers established a high-quality atmosphere for children's activities (i.e., Affect subscale) but were more reluctant to frequently employ the 7 instructional behaviors related to teacher behavior (i.e., Teaching Behavior subscale). In addition, it should be noted that on the 2002 Teacher Survey that teachers frequently ask for professional development in the areas of teaching literacy and numeracy and employing positive child guidance strategies with preschoolers. These two findings across both years of the project may suggest that teachers are comfortable in establishing developmentally appropriate classrooms but still desire assistance in embedding effective teaching strategies with children during child-initiated activities during center time.

#### **IV. Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with the teachers of the 15 preschool classrooms that had been observed and the coordinators of their respective programs. The teacher and early childhood coordinator interviews were developed in fall and winter 2002. During the spring of 2003, the two interview protocols were pilot - tested with a child development teacher and an



early childhood coordinator in Richland School District Two. Each teacher and each coordinator for the 15 preschools was called to arrange an appointment for the 30-minute telephone interview. An email or fax confirming the interview time, giving our contact information, and listing the specific questions to be asked was then sent them. This was to give interviewees an opportunity to look over the questions and consider their answers if they wished. Interviewees were informed that no information allowing their responses to be identified will be reported. All interviewees agreed to be tape-recorded. The audiotapes were then transcribed, and the responses were segmented by question using EXCEL and coded using NVivo qualitative software.

Because the interviews were designed as a follow-up to the Teacher and Coordinator Surveys from 2002, the interview protocol was constructed after the surveys were analyzed and presented to the Education Oversight Committee (EOC). Questions were constructed that would address issues in which Committee members and staff expressed interest. The interviews for the Coordinators and Teachers covered the following areas:

(a) Basic Information; (b) Overall Goals and Program; (c) Recruitment; (d) Curriculum; (e) Assessment; (f) Parent Programs; and (g) Coordination with Other Programs.

All of the 15 teachers and 15 coordinators were interviewed during the spring and summer of 2003. This report summarizes their responses.

### **Basic Information**

Teachers were first asked about their teaching assignments. Of the 15 teachers interviewed, 13 taught full-day classes and the remaining two taught both one morning session and one afternoon session. The range of number of students in classes was 16-20, with ten teachers reporting having 20 students in each of their classes.

Program coordinators were asked about the professional roles they played in addition to being coordinator for the four-year-old child development program. Four of the coordinators were principals of the elementary school in which the child development program was located. Five coordinators had other professional roles related to early childhood education (e.g., Pre-K through 1<sup>st</sup> grade) in addition to coordinating the four-year-old child development program, such as coordinating the parenting programs, providing High Scope curriculum training, or overseeing early childhood and Kindergarten assessment. Six coordinators had additional broader roles in the district that related to the education of older students as well. For example, one coordinator's role as assistant superintendent for elementary programs included being district test coordinator, managing grants, and supervising special reading programs. Another coordinator served also as curriculum coordinator and she directed professional development and

gifted and talented programs. Several coordinators in small and medium-sized school districts described numerous assignments.

### **Program Goals**

The four-year-old child development program was established to improve the school readiness of young children who are at risk for school failure. While school readiness and appropriate goals for four-year-old child development programs have been defined in different ways, there is general agreement that programs should be focused on the following domains of development: physical (including gross and fine motor development), cognitive (language/communicative, perceptual, and intellectual development), and social and emotional (development of self-regulation, emotional expression, and positive social relationships) (e.g., Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) Council, 2001). Discussions of programmatic goals for children in the early childhood literature often mention the integration of goal areas in instruction and interaction (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001). Teachers and coordinators were asked the following questions on program goals:

- What are the goals of your child development program for children?
- How do you think that your program is helping to prepare children for kindergarten and later elementary school?
- How would you expand or enhance your program if you could?
- Are there any significant barriers to meeting your preschool program goals?

Responses to our question “**What are the goals of your child development program for children?**” appear in the table below. As the table shows, the majority of teachers and half the coordinators mentioned developing cognitive skills as a goal of their programs. Others may have included aspects of academic skill development under goals of school success, preparation for kindergarten, and provide learning experiences corresponding to state standards. It is noteworthy that, despite the importance of physical and motor development for development in early childhood, only 20% of teachers and 7% of administrators mentioned it as a goal of their program. Also, our 2002 survey results indicated that the most frequently cited inadequate aspect of school facilities was preschools outdoor play areas. Only teachers mentioned the goals of creating a nurturing environment and promoting family involvement, perhaps because such concerns are embedded in the daily routine of teachers. Twenty percent of teachers said that they wanted their students to become independent learners, a concern that was extended into their goal that they develop self-regulation and a love of learning. As one teacher said, “We want them to be actively involved in their learning and learn to take responsibility for their own

behavior and use problem solving skills, use critical thinking skills, investigate and explore, and have an opportunity to develop social responsibility, problem solving with each other. We want them to learn some independence and things that they can learn ...that they can do on their own. And, also to have a good feeling about what school is about and being excited about learning.”

It appears that these teachers and coordinators embrace the goal of school readiness. During the interviews, eighty-seven percent of teachers either mentioned both cognitive and social skills or the broader goal of school success or preparation for kindergarten; the remaining 13% of teachers mentioned cognitive skills. All coordinators mentioned both cognitive and social skills or the broader goals of school success or preparation for school.

*Table 1*

Goals	Percentages	
	Teachers	Coordinators
	<i>N=15</i>	<i>N=15</i>
Develop cognitive skills	60%	53%
Develop social skills	53%	40%
Preparation for kindergarten	40%	27%
Emotional development	27%	13%
School success	27%	40%
Develop motor, physical skills	20%	7%
Provide learning experiences	13%	-
corresponding to state standards	-	-
Develop independent learners	20%	-
Create safe environment	7%	-
Create nurturing environment	-	13%
Promote family involvement	-	13%

To gain specific information on the school readiness goals of programs, we asked, **“How do you think your program is helping to prepare children for kindergarten and later elementary school?”** As the table below indicates, the development of academic and cognitive skills was most frequently reported by both teachers and coordinators. Developing social skills and being introduced to the schedules and routines of schooling were also frequently cited.

Table 2

Ways program is preparing children for kindergarten and elementary school	Percentages	
	Teachers <i>n</i> = 15	Coordinators <i>n</i> = 14
Develop academic skills for future	73%	40%
Develop social skills	40%	13%
Introduce to schedule and routine	27%	27%
Develop unspecified skills	13%	7%
Emotional development, self-esteem	13%	-
Develop motor, physical skills	7%	7%
Help to become independent thinkers	7%	-
Develop cognitive skills	-	7%
Exposure to new experiences	-	13%
Test data shows program prepares children for kindergarten	-	20%

To determine if there were additional goals that teachers and coordinators might want to pursue but were unable to, we asked, “**How would you expand or enhance your program if you could?**” Most coordinators wanted to expand their programs by adding more children, teachers, and preschool classrooms or by increasing class schedules from half-day to full-day programs. Teachers and coordinators also mentioned various kinds of materials, supplies, and equipment, including books and other curriculum materials. Field trips were the most frequently mentioned new experiences that teachers and coordinators wished to make available to their students.

Table 3

Ways would expand or enhance program if could	Percentages	
	Teachers <i>n = 15</i>	Coordinators <i>n = 14</i>
Increase class time to full day	27%	40%
More materials, supplies, equipment	20%	27%
Expose children to new experiences	13%	13%
Add more technology, computers	7%	7%
Decrease class size	7%	-
Incorporate the arts	7%	7%
Increase and improve professional development	7%	27%
More flexibility in curriculum	7%	-
More opportunities to work with families	7%	13%
Add cultural diversity activities	-	7%
Expand program to serve more children, add more teachers and classrooms	-	60%
Improve curriculum, add more academics	-	13%
Now satisfied with program	7%	-

When asked, “**Are there any significant barriers to meeting your preschool program goals?**”, both teachers and coordinators most often mentioned funding, which is consistent with their wish to expand their services. Another frequently named barrier was that administrators lack awareness about the needs of early childhood programs, and sometimes impose requirements more suitable for older children. As one coordinator stated, “So many of our school administrators do not have an early childhood background, and ...sometimes there is a real discrepancy in our philosophy and what we know is right for children and what all research tells us we need to be doing with young children, and what a school administrator may see as needing to be done with them.”

*Table 4*

Barriers to meeting preschool program goals	Percentages	
	Teachers <i>n = 15</i>	Coordinators <i>n = 14</i>
Insufficient funding	40%	73%
Insufficient cooperation from administrators, especially those without early childhood background	13%	20%
Insufficient parental participation	13%	-
Insufficient space	7%	20%
Lack of visual arts	7%	-
Limited outside play time	7%	-
Not enough teachers or classroom assistance	7%	7%
Old equipment, computers	7%	-
Can't recruit experienced early childhood teachers	-	7%
No barriers	40%	7%

## Recruitment

The legislation and regulations established the four-year-old child development program as intended to serve children “who have predicted significant readiness deficiencies.” To do this, each participating district is required to develop criteria for enrollment that includes “a screening instrument approved by the State Department of Education to be used in determining each child’s developmental level.” In addition, regulations indicate that districts must make “substantial efforts to publicize the availability of the program” (Regulation 43-264.1). The interviewers asked the following questions related to recruitment:

- How many of the children in your program are high-risk? If not all, please explain.
- How do you determine children’s high-risk status prior to enrollment?
- How do you recruit high-risk children into your program?
- Are there high-risk children and families that you would like to enroll but have been unable to? What were the problems with enrollment of those high-risk children and families?
- What are your ideas about how you could improve recruitment and retention of high-risk children?

Table 5 indicates the responses of teachers and coordinators to the question, “**How many of the children in your program are high-risk?**” We also asked them to explain if not all their students were high risk. For this table and for all tables for which each respondent gave a single answer for their program, the number of respondents giving an answer rather than the percentage is listed on the table. The percentage is listed in cases where respondents gave multiple answers to a question, such as when they described more than one goal for their child development programs.

*Table 5: The Percentage of High-risk Children in Classrooms  
According to Teachers and Coordinators*

% High-risk	Teachers (n=15)	Coordinators (n=15)
All	6	3
Most*	2	
90		3
80	1	
70		3
60	2	
50	1	
40	1	1
30		1
20	1	1
None	1	
Unspecified Number		2

\*Did not specify a percentage



As the table shows, 6 of the teachers and 3 of the coordinators reported that all their students were high-risk. A disparity between teachers and coordinators might be expected, because many coordinators are in charge of more than one classroom. Two teachers mentioned that there were different percentages of at-risk children in different classrooms in their district. Two coordinators did not specify a number or percentage of children who were at risk. One of them said she had “a problem with the word, high-risk,” and went on to imply that while many of her children did have problems, she did not want to demean them by labeling them in this way. The other coordinator who didn’t specify a number said that her district had funded full-day four-year-old programs for all children who wished to attend for many years.

Four teachers and three coordinators reported that half or less of their students were high-risk. There are several reasons they gave for their program not serving all high-risk children. Two of these teachers and all three coordinators explained that they were able to serve all children who applied. Other programs may be funded from multiple sources; one coordinator mentioned using First Steps funding and another mentioned the general district fund. It should be noted that our 2002 Survey of coordinators found that more than half reported receiving some funding from First Steps and from their school district. Five coordinators said that children who were most at-risk were served first, with remaining slots allocated to those at lower risk. Two coordinators mentioned the issue of using funding for half-day programs, which serve more children, versus programs, which serve fewer students. One coordinator, who estimated her program served 70% high-risk children, said, she would rather cut the half-day programs and would prefer to serve only the most high-risk children in a full-day program. One other teacher noted the value of having mixed (high-risk and non-high-risk) children in classrooms in order to provide models to high-risk children.

Because the legislation creating the four-year-old child development program requires that districts publicize the availability of the program, and because the percentage of high-risk children served depends on their parents’ being made aware of its availability, we asked how programs recruit high-risk children. Our earlier survey had shown that almost all programs used newspapers to increase public awareness of programs, and more than half used contacts with families and community groups and organizations, brochures, open houses, and radio and television. Our interview found that teachers and coordinators used a variety of methods to recruit at-risk students. Both teachers and coordinators frequently reported using media, flyers,

and written communication to parents. Coordinators frequently reported that parent educators and individuals working for other community agencies made potential enrollees aware of the program. As one coordinator said, part of the job of parent educators who work with high-risk families is to “make sure that those children get in that pre-registered pool for 4K.” She also said that her district puts programs in schools with higher numbers of children receiving free or reduced-price lunches. Programs reported using from 1 to 4 recruiting methods, with an average of 2.5 methods per program.

*Table 6*

Recruitment method	Percentages	
	Teachers <i>n</i> =15	Coordinators <i>n</i> =15
Media: newspaper, Internet, news, etc.	47%	40%
Flyers in the community	40%	47%
Written communication to parents	33%	27%
Word of mouth	27%	13%
Parent educator	20%	47%
Referral from agencies	13%	53%
Yearly child sign-up	13%	-
Advertise at school	7%	13%
Advertise at other schools	7%	-
Did not answer question	20%	-

The legislation also requires that criteria for enrollment include the use of a screening instrument. Teachers or coordinators from all the fifteen programs reported using a screening instrument. In addition, they reported using information about the child’s family or background characteristics. Specifically, 9 of the programs reported systematically considering information on the child’s socioeconomic and family status (e.g., single parent, grandparent, or foster parent, parental education) and other issues or problems the child might have (e. g., handicapping conditions, history of maltreatment, non-English speaking). Some of this information comes

from referrals from other agencies. Four programs screen for speech, vision, or hearing problems. One teacher was not aware of testing prior to enrollment, but her coordinator described a pre-enrollment testing procedure.

*Table 7*

	Percentages	
	Teachers	Coordinators
Method to determine high-risk status	<i>n</i> = 15	<i>n</i> = 15
Dial 3	87%	87%
Information on family, background, child's record	40%	53%
Unspecified testing	7%	-
Referrals from agencies	-	40%
Screening: speech, vision, hearing	-	27%
No testing prior to enrollment	7%	-

Because of concern that there might be groups of at-risk children who are not served by this program, we asked “**Are there high-risk children and families that you would like to enroll but have been unable to, or, if enrolled, to retain?**” As Table 8 indicates, 53% of teachers and 40% of coordinators said there were no such groups. Four teachers and five coordinators said they serve all children who apply to the program. An additional four teachers and one coordinator acknowledged that there might be students who do not apply. One coordinator said, “...to tell you that we know for sure that we reach every family, we know we don't. We make every effort we can to reach them.” She then described several outreach efforts, but noted that “short of going door-to-door to every house in the community,” she could not say she had reached 100% of families, and that even then she might miss families who move in during the year.

The most frequent reason for not serving all high-risk children was limitations in funding, reported by 20% of coordinators and 20% of teachers. They mentioned at-risk children on waiting lists and those who needed full-day programs that will be cut to half day in the coming year. Other unserved high-risk children were described as having parents who didn't realize the importance of the program, or whose families are transient. Two teachers and 3 coordinators

(representing 4 different programs) mentioned their difficulty gaining access to members of the Hispanic community.

*Table 8*

High-risk groups you are unable to enroll or retain?	Percentages	
	Teachers <i>n</i> =15	Coordinators <i>n</i> =15
No, we serve all children who apply	27%	-
No, do not know of any unserved	27%	33%
High-risk children who cannot enroll due to limited funding or classroom	20%	48%
Hispanic children	13%	20%
Children of parents who do not realize the importance of program	7%	13%
Children of parents who need full-day programs	7%	7%
Children who attend other or no program and appear at kindergarten unready	7%	-
Transient students who seek to enroll when program is full	7%	13%

We also asked the teachers and coordinators “**As a teacher/coordinator, what are your ideas about how you could improve the recruitment and retention of high risk children?**”

Four teachers and two coordinators had no ideas, most asserting that they had no problem in this area. One said that decreased funding meant that there would probably be a smaller program, and therefore improved recruitment is not needed. The most frequently stated recruitment idea was to reach parents of at-risk children more effectively, with several respondents stressing the importance of energetic parent educators’ convincing parents of the value and ready availability of this program.

Other recruitment ideas require financial resources, such as maintaining or increasing funding (suggested by a teacher who stated that she needed an additional aide, asserting that two adults were not sufficient to provide a high quality program for 20 at-risk four-year-olds). The suggestion that more full-day programs be provided and that a summer program be instituted would also require added funding.

Additional ideas include those that improve communication with the community. Better advertisement (one teacher suggested more outreach to churches), hiring more Hispanic personnel, and working more closely with agencies that could refer students were suggested. Two coordinators suggested that the enrollment period be extended to match that of private day-care providers, and that churches should be asked to announce an ongoing invitation for prospective students and their parents to visit the program.

*Table 9*

Ideas on improving recruitment and retention of high-risk children	Percentages	
	Teachers <i>n</i> =15	Coordinators <i>n</i> =15
More emphasis on educating parents about the availability and value of program	40%	27%
Continue adequate funding or increase funding	13%	13%
Better advertisement in community	7%	13%
Clarify how program differs from Head Start	7%	-
Provide summer school for skill development	7%	-
Provide for children who need full-day programs	7%	20%
Extend enrollment period	-	13%
Hire more Hispanic personnel	-	20%
Work closely with referring agencies	-	7%
No ideas	27%	13%

## Curriculum

Responses to the 2002 Teacher and Coordinator Surveys and other reports (SDE, December, 2002) indicated that High Scope was the most frequently used curriculum, and was used by about half of the programs. Moreover, almost all programs used one (or a combination) of the four curricula that had been supported by the South Carolina Department of Education: High Scope, Montessori, Creative Curriculum, or Project Approach. On the earlier survey, teachers also described the areas in which they wanted to receive inservice training or technical assistance, and listed “Literacy and numeracy activities for preschoolers” as their highest priority. The importance of using a systematic curriculum is noted by Bowman, Donovan, and Burns, (2001) who reviewed preschool curricula and, stating the difficulty of deciding which is best, say “We do know, however, that having a planned curriculum in a preschool program is better than having none.” To gain more information on educational programs, specifically with regard to preacademic skills, teachers and coordinators were asked the following questions:

- What curriculum do you use? Are there any plans to change or modify it?
- How do you assess the implementation of your curriculum to see that you are doing what the curriculum specifies? (*from Assessment section of interview*)
- How was the decision made to use this curriculum?
- How satisfied are you with your curriculum?
- How do you plan for the development of children’s emerging literacy and numeracy skills? (preacademic readiness skills)
- Do you use the South Carolina pre-K language arts standards as you plan your curriculum? If so, how do you use them?
- Do you use the South Carolina pre-K mathematics standards as you plan your curriculum? If so, how do you use them?

Coordinators were first asked, “**Do all your classrooms use the same curriculum?**” Eleven of the fifteen coordinators stated unequivocally that all their classes used the same curriculum, and three others indicated that it was their intention that the same curriculum be used, although they could not be sure that all used the curriculum with the same fidelity. One of these three coordinators said that she has been conducting inservice activities working toward all her teachers’ meticulous use of High Scope. Another of the three said that some programs might go at a slower pace than others, but all use the same curriculum; the third of these coordinators

said there were probably differences in the numeracy and literacy curricula used. The fifteenth coordinator said that while most of her teachers used High Scope, a few had been trained in the Creative Curriculum and the Project Approach and used these curricula.

The table below lists the responses of teachers and coordinators to the question “**What curriculum do you use?**” The 2002 Survey had found that 43% of teachers reported using High Scope, one of the most widely adopted preschool curricula; among our teacher interviewees, 80% report using it. All curricula named were among the four recommended by the State Department, which also provides training. One teacher used no specific curriculum. Interestingly, five programs used supplementary curricula in specific areas, some using more than one. Most often supplemented were literacy and mathematics.

*Table 10*

	Teachers n =15	Coordinators n =15
Basic Curriculum Used		
High Scope	11	12
Creative Curriculum	1	1
Project Approach and High Scope	1	-
High Scope, Project Approach, or Creative Curriculum	-	1
Other	2	1

Table 11

Area of Supplementary Curriculum Use Reported	Percentages	
	Teachers <i>n</i> = 15	Coordinators <i>n</i> = 15
Literacy	27%	13%
Mathematics	13%	-
Character Education	7%	7%
Science	7%	-
Developmental	7%	-

Because it is important that curricula be well implemented to be effective, teachers and coordinators were asked, “**How do you assess the implementation of your curriculum to see that you are doing what the curriculum specifies?**” Responses to this question indicate that teachers most often report that they monitor their lesson plans to insure that they include topics specified by their curriculum or by state standards. Those who use High Scope check on their provision of the Key Experiences to assess content coverage. Administrators report observing or checking lesson plans to insure coverage of curricula or standards. Aside from responses that report systematic use of an instrument such as the High Scope Program Quality Assessment or the ECERS-R, there appeared to be no systematic procedure for assessing the quality of the preschool environment. Indeed, several interviewees appeared not to understand what was meant by the question, and answered with descriptions of child assessments or described how they evaluated their current curriculum to see whether they wanted to continue using it. The answers indicate that few programs carefully assess the implementation of a curriculum, which ideally should include systematic observations of instructional procedures as well as monitoring content coverage. It does appear that most teachers and coordinators are trying to make sure that they include all required content areas, and that several are assessing the quality of classrooms or



experiences provided. This might be improved by continued efforts of the State Department of Education to provide training in using the ECERS-R.

*Table 12*

	Teachers	Coordinators
How implementation of curriculum is assessed	<i>n</i> = 15	<i>n</i> = 15
Only child assessments are described as measure of curriculum quality	4	3
Record of High Scope Key Experiences documents curriculum implementation	3	-
Teachers check own and/or others' lesson plans	3	1
Administrators observe or check lesson plans	1	6
Assessment of curriculum, rather than implementation, is described	1	3
Building on children's interests and including standards shows implementation of Creative Curriculum	1	-
High Scope Program Quality Assessment or ECERS-R classroom observations	1	2
No method of assessing curriculum or implementation is described	1	-

When asked “**Are there any plans to change or modify it (your curriculum)?**” 4 of the 15 teachers and 4 of the 15 coordinators said that they were considering changing or

modifying their curricula. Three coordinators mentioned plans to add additional literacy components to their curriculum, and one of them planned to also implement Everyday Math, which is to be newly available for the preschool level. One coordinator said that they always reevaluated their curriculum at the end of the year based on student assessments and state standards.

When asked “**How was the decision made to use this curriculum?**” Coordinators and teachers had seldom selected the curriculum they were using. Rather, all but two coordinators reported that it had been decided upon by the state, by district administrators, or that it was already in place when they arrived. The remaining two coordinators said it had been the teachers’ decision to use the curriculum. Teachers gave similar answers; two reported that they had decided on the curriculum, including a teacher who did not use a specified curriculum and chose her curriculum based on best practices. One teacher reported that a team of district teachers selected the supplementary math and character education curricula.

Despite their lack of participation in deciding upon the curriculum, most coordinators and teachers reported being very satisfied (40% of coordinators, 33% of teachers ) or satisfied (33% of coordinators, 47% of teachers). The few remaining coordinators and teachers spoke about the need for continuous reevaluation and improvement and did not mention specific problems. One teacher, supporting her preference for the Creative Curriculum said that High Scope was “fine in its time, but the needs for preparing children for 5K have changed.” One coordinator mentioned her wish to provide additional literacy experiences.

To more closely examine the preacademic preparation provided by the four-year-old child development programs, coordinators and teachers were asked, “**How do you plan for the development of children’s emerging literacy and numeracy (preacademic readiness) skills?**” Coordinators typically answered the question by describing curricular or staff development activities, although a few described methods used in their classrooms. Their responses appear in the table below, and suggest that most curricula provide for the development of preacademic readiness skills. Literacy is more often the focus of administrative attention than is numeracy, with twice as many coordinators describing staff development and specific curricula, consultants, or grants in the areas of literacy than in numeracy.

Table 13

Coordinators' descriptions of plans for emergent literacy and numeracy	Percentages	
	Literacy <i>n</i> = 15	Numeracy <i>n</i> = 15
Specifically targeted curriculum, consultant, or grant provides experiences in this area	53%	27%
Staff development is provided in this area	40%	20%
Specific teaching methods described	20%	40%
We work through standards in this area	7%	20%
Answer does not address question	20%	7%

Teachers typically described examples of specific classroom methods they used to teach literacy and numeracy or specific aspects of literacy and numeracy addressed in their classrooms. Again, literacy appeared to be a more prominent focus, with more teachers describing more instructional methods or aspects for literacy than numeracy, and four times as many teachers describing specific grants or curricula in literacy than in numeracy. Most frequently mentioned literacy activities were reading to students, including using big books, and rhyming and other phonemic activities. Counting was the most frequently mentioned numeracy activity; sorting, using graphs, detecting patterns, and using the calendar were also named. Teachers also appeared to include preacademic readiness as a component of their curriculum.

*Table 14*

Teachers' descriptions of plans for emergent literacy and numeracy	Literacy <i>n</i> =15	Numeracy <i>n</i> =15
1-3 Instructional activities or aspects described for area	4	8
4-6 Instructional activities or aspects described for area	5	3
Specifically targeted grant or curriculum is provided for this area	4	1
Standards provide direction for activities in this area	1	1
Dial 3 pretesting indicates needed skills for individual students	1	1
No information given on this area	-	1

Finally, coordinators and teachers were asked, **“Do you use the South Carolina pre-K language arts standards as you plan your curriculum? If so, how do you use them?”** They were then asked, **“Do you use the South Carolina pre-K mathematics standards as you plan your curriculum? If so, how do you use them?”** The tables below summarize their replies, and indicate that most teachers and coordinators plan or evaluate their curriculum using procedures that insure that instruction will address both state language arts and mathematics standards. However, there were teachers and coordinators who said they used the standards but failed to describe how they were used. Several teachers did give detailed descriptions of planning activities, and one said she was going back to check the measurement standard to make sure she had taught her students all the kinds of measurement the standard specified. Two teachers said that they had seen that the High Scope curriculum addressed the standards well. However, one teacher’s response indicated that there may be problems accessing the standards;

she described coming as a teacher new to South Carolina at the start of the school year and trying unsuccessfully to find state standards or recommended curricula.

*Table 15*

Use of Language Arts Standards to Plan Curriculum	Teachers <i>n</i> =15	Coordinators <i>n</i> =15
Yes, we plan or evaluate curriculum so that it will be aligned to standards	10	8
Yes, our literacy specialist assures that training fits standards	-	2
We assess children on standards via checklist	-	1
Yes. (Systematic use not described)	5	4

*Table 16*

Use of Mathematics Standards to Plan Curriculum	Teachers <i>n</i> =15	Coordinators <i>n</i> =15
Yes, we plan or evaluate curriculum so that it will be aligned to standards	12	9
We assess children on standards via checklist	-	1
Yes. (Systematic use not described)	3	4
Don't know if teachers use	-	1

## Assessment

On the 2002 survey, teachers and coordinators were asked to describe how they evaluated their programs and the progress of their children. Because assessment is essential to program improvement, the interviewer asked several questions that provide more details on how assessments were conducted and used. The following questions were asked:

- How do you assess individual child progress?
- How do you go about reviewing and using results of child assessments?
- How do you use assessments to decide on changes you would like to make in your program/classroom?
- Do you have any ideas on how to improve your child assessments? (Asked only of coordinators)
- What kinds of assistance would be helpful for your teachers to improve their assessment practices? *OR* What kinds of assistance would be helpful to you as a teacher to improve your assessment practices?

(An additional question on the assessment of curricular implementation was discussed in the section on curriculum.)

When asked, “**How do you assess individual progress?**” teachers and coordinators reported using many methods. Measures that had been reported to be frequently used on the 2002 survey were also mentioned in this interview. Most frequently named by interview respondents were Teacher Observations, Checklists, Anecdotal Notes, and some form of the DIAL. Three teachers and four coordinators specifically mentioned that the DIAL was used for pre- to post-comparisons, a purpose for which screening tools are not recommended. Checklists were also frequently reported; to be used for assessment purposes, they should be developmentally scaled and empirically validated (Horton & Bowman, 2002).

Table 17

	Percentages	
	Teachers	Coordinators
Methods used to assess individual child progress	<i>n = 15</i>	<i>n = 15</i>
Anecdotal Notes	67%	27%
Checklist	67%	33%
Teacher Observation	60%	47%
Portfolios, Journals, Work Samples, Photographs, Videos	33%	20%
DIAL (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning)*	27%	53%
High Scope COR (Child Observation Record)	13%	20%
Various Literacy Assessments	7%	27%
Work Sampling System	7%	13%

\*includes speed DIAL, DIAL-R and DIAL-3

Teachers and coordinators were also asked, “**How do you go about reviewing and using the results of child assessments?**” The differing roles of teachers and coordinators were evident in their responses. Teachers focused on using assessments of individual children to plan for their instructional needs, to inform parents of their children’s progress, and to suggest instructional activities parents can provide at home. They also used assessments to plan for whole class or small group instruction; this was more frequently mentioned when teachers were asked, in the next question, specifically about using assessments to decide on program changes. Coordinators focused on using assessments to report to parents and to document program gains. One

coordinator said, “I’ll be honest with you, having something to show our superintendent .....that the program is making a difference for children, that was great!”

*Table 19*

	Percentages	
	Teachers <i>n = 15</i>	Coordinators <i>n = 15</i>
How assessments are reviewed and used		
Assessments analyzed for individual children to plan focus or modification of instruction or need for special program	80%	13%
Assessments used to report to child’s parents and to suggest instructional activities they can do with child	40%	33%
Assessments used to assess gains and plan instruction for class or groups of students	33%	13%
Assessments are shared with 5K teachers	-	13%
Assessments used only for admissions	-	7%
Assessments used to monitor and document gains	-	33%

More information on programmatic changes that are based on assessments was gathered from answers to the question, “**How do you use assessments to decide on changes you would like to make in your program?**” Both teachers and coordinators said child assessments are used to decide on changes needed in instructional programs. Coordinators also mentioned using other assessment methods as well as measures of children’s progress to decide on changes needed in classrooms they supervise.



*Table 19*

	Teachers <i>n</i> =15	Coordinators <i>n</i> =15
How assessments used to decide changes in program		
Monitor child progress or interests to decide needed changes in instructional program	12	9
Monitor assessment methods to decide on most informative method	1	-
Assess classroom program (including use of ECERS, consultants) to decide needed change	-	5
Monitor child progress for special educational needs of individual children	-	1
Answer does not address question	2	-

Coordinators were asked, “**Do you have any ideas on how to improve your child assessments?**” They most frequently responded with the suggestion to implement the Work Sampling System (now planned) and to give teachers professional training in assessments.

Table 20

	Coordinators
Ideas on how to improve child assessments	<i>n</i> =15
Give teachers more training in assessment	3
Implement the Work Sampling System	3
Use more assessment methods to more sensitively gauge children's needs	2
Use teacher feedback to decide on improvements to assessments needed	2
Add a midyear checklist assessment to see if curricular adjustments are needed	1
Get a baseline assessment to permit monitoring of gains	1
New computerized tabulating and reporting formats should be used	1
No answer or no suggestions	2

Finally, both teachers and coordinators were asked, “**What kinds of assistance would be helpful to improve assessment teachers’ practices?**” Both teachers and coordinators wanted training to be provided on assessments targeted to early childhood issues. Several noted that such training needed to address the special issues of assessing very young children. Coordinators also believed that their teachers might be helped by onsite training or consultation, whereas teachers said they needed more time or assistance to conduct and analyze assessments.

Table 21

	Percentages	
	Teachers <i>n = 15</i>	Coordinators <i>n = 15</i>
Kinds of assistance that would be helpful to improve assessments		
More time or personnel to provide assistance in conducting, analyzing and reporting assessments	33%	7%
Better measures and reporting instruments	20%	-
Funded or state-provided training on methods recommended specifically for early childhood assessment	20%	40%
Clear guidelines for assessment procedures	13%	7%
Assistance in implementation of and training for use of the Work Sampling System	7%	13%
Meetings with five-year-old teachers to present information on children's assessments	7%	-
Outside observer or consultant to come onsite to train	7%	27%
Funding to provide local training, including providing teacher time	-	13%
No assistance needed at this time	13%	-

## Parent Programs

Because parents are the “first teachers” of children, and because parental influences are so critical in establishing the quality of the environments in which children grow, educational and support programs that foster parental growth and skill development are considered necessary to enhance the development of at-risk children and families. In addition, strong and positive relationships between families and school personnel promote cooperation that can support the attainment of educational goals. In addition, the topic “Working with families of preschoolers” was second-ranked in level of interest for inservice training on the 2002 survey distributed to all teachers. For this reason, teachers and coordinators were asked about the parent and family literacy programs in which they or the parents of their students were involved. Because some interviewees had more knowledge and experience with parent programs than others, all were not asked the same questions. Areas in which interviewees gave responses include the following:

- Level of responsibility for parenting or family literacy program (coordinate, implement or support, have knowledge)
- Description of nature of parenting or family literacy programs (from all who have knowledge of program)
  - Description of funding sources for these programs (from parent program coordinators)
  - Description of coordination with other programs (from parent program coordinators)
- Strategies interviewees use to recruit parents of at-risk preschoolers into parent and family literacy programs
- Assessment of effectiveness of recruitment into parent and family literacy programs
- Suggestions for improvement of programs (from program coordinators)
- Kinds of assistance needed to improve parent programs (from teachers)

Coordinators of the four-year-old programs were asked “**Are you also responsible for coordinating parenting and/or family literacy programs?**” Only three coordinators were responsible for coordinating such programs, with three additional coordinators responsible for supervising the coordinator of parenting and family literacy programs. Two coordinators described themselves as working closely with or supporting the work of this person, and one of these coordinators gave information about the program.

Table 22

Response to: Do you have responsibility for coordinating parenting and/or family literacy programs?	Coordinators <i>n</i> = 15
No	7
No, I supervise this person	3
No, but I work with or support	2
Yes	3

Teachers were asked, “**Are you responsible for implementing or supporting parenting and family literacy programs?**” Only three teachers responded that they were responsible, but an additional eight asserted that they themselves provided parenting or family literacy programs themselves. The most frequent programs they conduct are related to the preacademic goals of their classrooms, and include providing workshops and information on how parents can assist children in developing skills in science, math, and literacy. They also provide loans of books and other materials to help in this effort. Some teachers provide workshops on general developmental topics, and others send home newsletters and flyers on upcoming programs. Several mentioned doing home visits, consistent with the survey on which 88% of teachers reported conducting a home visit with each child in their class. Others reported referring parents to parenting coordinators or to other liaisons who might help them find services they or their families need.

Table 23

Response to: Do you have responsibility for implementing and supporting parenting and/or family literacy programs?	Teachers <i>n</i> = 15
No, but I do parenting and/or family literacy activities too	8
No	4
Yes	3

Both teachers and coordinators were asked to “**describe parenting and family literacy programs**” with which they were involved or with which they were familiar. Eight teachers and eleven coordinators described some elements of the program provided. Teachers most often reported that the parenting program coordinator worked individually with families at home or in a parenting center by focusing on important parenting skills. Two teachers specifically mentioned family literacy activities the coordinator conducted. Ten of the eleven coordinators mentioned family literacy activities, and eight reported the work with individual families that the teachers had also described. The existence of a parenting center or office where parents can easily access materials and assistance was mentioned by four coordinators and one teacher. There appear to be differences in the availability of services to teachers of four-year-old child development programs. One teacher said her parenting coordinator makes contact with parents who have been unresponsive or hard to reach, while another teacher reported that parenting and family literacy programs in her district were geared more to the upper grades.

Coordinators who indicated they were knowledgeable about funding were asked about “**the source of funds**” for their programs, and asked to respond regarding funding received from the sources listed on the table below. As the table indicates, most parenting/family literacy coordinators received funds from EIA, First Steps, Local Funds, and Federal Funds.

Table 24

Sources of funding for this parenting and/or family literacy program	Coordinators knowledgeable about funding <i>n = 6</i>
EIA	100%
First Steps	100%
Other State funds	50%
Local Funds	83%
Federal Funds	83%
Other?	0

Coordinators who indicated they were knowledgeable about agencies with which parenting and family literacy programs coordinated were asked about how they coordinate their programs with other programs. They were asked to indicate “**with which of the following programs do you coordinate your efforts?**” by being asked to respond regarding their coordination with the first four agencies (and “other”) listed on the table below. According to legislation and regulations (Regulation 43-264.1), programs are to coordinate their efforts with parenting/family literacy components of their school districts’ plans. As the table indicates, most parenting/family literacy coordinators coordinated efforts with Adult Education, First Steps, Head Start, and Title I parenting programs.

*Table 25. Programs with which at least two of the six coordinators reported coordinating efforts.*

	Coordinators knowledgeable about coordinating programs <i>n = 6</i>
Other programs with which parenting and/or family literacy program coordinates	
Adult Education	100%
First Steps	100%
Head Start	83%
Title I parenting	83%
United Way	50%
Health department, Dental Services	33%
DSS	33%
Universities	33%

Teachers and coordinators were asked, “**What strategies do you use to recruit parents of at-risk preschoolers to participate in parenting or family literacy programs?**” The six teachers and seven coordinators who were knowledgeable about these programs were asked this question, and their responses indicate that parents and coordinators approach this issue in different ways. Teachers focus on aspects of a specific event, and most frequently mention providing food or rewards, or making the event enjoyable for the family. Coordinators focus on locating participants, and most often mention coordinating with other agencies that also serve at-risk families and trying to locate siblings of at-risk students now served.



Table 26

	Percentages	
	Teachers <i>n</i> = 6	Coordinators <i>n</i> = 7
Strategies used to recruit families of at-risk preschoolers to participate in parenting or family literacy programs		
Snack or meal for family	67%	14%
Enjoyable family programs, such as field trips, library night at County Library, book fair, story time to demonstrate story-telling, Fun-Filled Friday with parents as visitors to school	50%	-
Offer rewards, door prizes, free books for children who come	50%	-
Movies or other fun activities for all children in family while parents in meeting or program	33%	14%
Open communication to make parent feel welcome, personal notes and telephone calls to invite and chat	33%	-
Classroom child of the week programs	17%	-
Get names of new parents from hospital, check for those having at-risk characteristics	17%	29%
Provide parents an opportunity to attend meetings and discuss and network while program provides childcare	17%	-

---

Home visits and flyers	17%	14%
Cooperate with other agencies that serve at-risk families to provide multiple services	-	71%
Contact families of children who are in program now or unsuccessful in elementary school, check for younger siblings	-	43%
Publicize services by speaking at groups or organizations	-	14%

---

Teachers' and coordinators' responses to the question "**How effective are these parenting and family literacy programs in recruiting parents of at-risk preschoolers?**" indicate that a substantial minority of programs have some difficulty with recruiting. To clarify difficulties, interviewees' descriptions of their perceptions of reasons for the success of recruitment were tabulated and are listed on Table 28.

*Table 27*

---

How effective are these parenting and family literacy programs at recruiting parents of at-risk preschoolers?	Teachers <i>n</i> = 15	Coordinators <i>n</i> = 15
Not as effective as hoped	7	4
Effective	1	5
Very Effective	5	6
Don't know, no answer	2	-

---

Table 28 summarizes the reasons given for effectiveness of recruiting parents to parenting and family literacy activities. Most answers mentioned the need for energetic and effective coordinators who used good strategies. An additional three respondents expressed frustration that parents do not come to programs but said they do not understand why parents do not attend. Several other respondents mentioned problems families have in finding time for parenting activities; 3 of the respondents blamed parent apathy and parent failure to make parenting programs a priority. A few insights were given into successful recruitment; two coordinators mentioned the importance of a good location for the parenting center or office. One coordinator responded to a later question saying she had noted that parents more often came to family activities than to meetings.

*Table 28*

What is responsible for effectiveness or ineffectiveness of recruiting to parenting or family literacy programs?	Teachers <i>n</i> =15	Coordinators <i>n</i> =15
Excellent personnel who use good strategies	27%	27%
Parent apathy; Parents not appreciating that they need to make attendance at programs a priority	33%	7%
Some parents have work and family responsibilities that prevent their attendance or make it difficult	7%	-
Location of center near other agencies and not in school helps recruiting	-	13%
Don't know why program is not getting desired level of response, but will continue to work at it and try new times and programs	7%	13%

Coordinators were asked, “**Do you have any suggestions on how to improve parenting and family literacy programs?**” Of the five respondents, the need for more funding was mentioned by two. Suggestions mentioned by one coordinator were the need for a central location for all adult programs and the need for well-trained professionals rather than paraprofessionals. Teachers were asked the analogous question, “**What kinds of assistance would be helpful to you as a teacher to improve your parent programs?**” and three mentioned the need for funding to continue parent programs and to obtain speakers and materials for events. Suggestions made by one teacher included the need for a network of preschool teachers to share ideas, the need for inservice training in this area, and the need for relationships with workplaces that would permit parents to attend parenting and family literacy programs.

### **Coordination and Collaboration**

Coordinators were asked, “**Could you name agencies you coordinate and collaborate with?**” Agencies named by 20% or more of coordinators are listed below. Only a third named Parent Facilitators, perhaps because some coordinators consider them to be part of their own agencies. Agencies offering social services and medical/health care were frequently named. Each coordinator named from 2 to 15 agencies, with 5 as the median number of agencies named. Two coordinators named other individuals who handled coordination and could answer this question better than they, and an additional two ended their list with “many more.”

Table 29. Agencies named by 20% or more

	Percentages
	Coordinators
Agencies coordinate and collaborate with	<i>n</i> = 15
DSS	87%
Med providers and Hospitals	53%
First steps	53%
HHS	47%
Head Start	40%
Parenting facilitators	33%
Local Civic or Ethnically Based Organizations	27%
Mental health services	27%
Baby net	27%
Health Dept	20%
Dental services	20%

Coordinators were also asked, “**Are there factors that hinder your ability to coordinate with other community agencies?**” As the table below shows, 9 of the 15 coordinators replied that there were no such factors, while 5 listed time as the only limitation.

Table 30

	Coordinators
Factors that hinder ability to coordinate with other agencies	<i>n</i> = 15
None	9
Time	5
Their rules don't allow them to serve all of our students	1

### Final Question

Before closing the interview, teachers and coordinators were asked, “**Is there anything we missed that it would be important for us to know?**” Of the eight coordinators and seven teachers who responded, 8 mentioned the need for additional funding, including enhancements for programs and adding classrooms, and 7 spoke about the importance of the program and its benefits for children. One coordinator said, “I just feel that what we can do for children early on is so important,” and another responded, “The only thing is that we are all about children. Children come first here.”

### Critical Issues

Based on our two years of work, these are the critical issues:

- How to assure that all preschoolers who are at risk for school readiness difficulties are recruited and enrolled in high-quality preschool programs
- How to enhance the ability of child development programs to promote school readiness, particularly in areas of child assessment and curriculum implementation
- How to promote interagency coordination and collaboration of early childhood services for children and their families

## **Recommendations**

Based on our two years of work, these are our recommendations:

- Disseminate clear criteria for what constitutes at risk status for children and families.
- Establish methods in EIA-funded preschools that promote recruitment and enrollment of all children who are at the greatest risk for school readiness difficulties
- As funds become available or as flexible use of funds is permitted, allocate future EIA funding to serve children who are at risk, or to enroll children who are at risk in full-day programs, or both
- South Carolina should establish an interagency task force composed of public and private stakeholders in early childhood services to review implementation issues and make recommendations to address those issues
- South Carolina should establish a statewide, interagency professional development system for preschool personnel that will identify professional needs and implement and evaluate professional development activities to meet those needs, especially in the areas of
  - (1) literacy and numeracy
  - (2) working with families
  - (3) Developmentally Appropriate Practices for children
  - (4) positive child guidance strategies
  - (5) assessment of children's learning

## References

- Bowman, B. T., Donovan, M. S., & Burns, M. S. (Eds.). (2001). *Eager to learn: Educating our Preschoolers*. (National Research Council Committee on Early Childhood Pedagogy, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Bredekamp, S. & Copple, C. (Eds.) (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs* (Rev. ed.). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Harms, T., Clifford, R. M., & Cryer, D. (1998). *Early childhood environment rating scale - revised edition*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Horton, C., & Bowman, B.T. (2002). Child assessment at the preprimary level: Expert opinion and state trends. *Erikson Institute Occasional Paper #3*. Chicago, IL: Erikson Institute.
- McWilliam, R. A., Zulli, R. A., & de Kruif, R. E. L. (1998). *Teachers Styles Rating Scale (TSRS) Manual*. Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- Peisner-Feinberg, E. S., Burchinal, M. R., Clifford, R. M., Culkin, M. L., Howes, C., Kagan, S. L., Yazejian, N., Byler, P., Rustici, J., & Zelazo, J. (2000). *The children of the cost, quality, and outcomes study go to school: Technical report*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center.
- Regulation 43-264.1 Half-Day Child Development Programs. Final Regulation, South Carolina Department of Education, Chapter 43. Statutory Authority: 59-5-60 and 1993 Act #135. *The Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act*.

<sup>1</sup>It should be noted that participating school districts were assured anonymity as a condition for participation in this project. Procedural anonymity is often employed as a technique to obtain the best information available and was approved by the both the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) and the USC Institutional Review Board (IRB).



**APPENDIX A**  
***ECERS-R & TSRS Scores by Districts***

***Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised Edition (ECERS-R) Subscales  
and Total Scale Scores***

***ECERS-R Subscale 1 - Space and Furnishings Subscale***

***ECERS-R Subscale 2 - Personal Care Routines Subscale***

***ECERS-R Subscale 3 - Language Reasoning Subscale***

***ECERS-R Subscale 4 - Activities Subscale***

***ECERS-R Subscale 5 - Interaction Sub scale***

***ECERS-R Subscale 6 - Program Structure Subscale***

***ECERS-R Subscale 7 - Parents and Staff Subscale***

***ECERS-R Total Scale Scores***

***Teacher Styles Rating Scales (TSRS) Subscale Scores***

***TSRS Subscale 1 - Teacher Behavior***

***TSRS Subscale 2 - Affect***

**ECRS-R Scale 1**

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
District 1	5.5000	6.5000	1.92725	2.00	7.00
District 2	5.7500	6.5000	1.48805	4.00	7.00
District 3	4.7500	4.5000	1.66905	2.00	7.00
District 4	5.1250	5.5000	2.10017	2.00	7.00
District 5	5.3750	7.0000	2.72226	1.00	7.00
District 6	5.1250	5.0000	1.88509	2.00	7.00
District 7	4.1250	4.0000	2.10017	1.00	7.00
District 8	6.2500	7.0000	1.75255	2.00	7.00
District 9	5.8750	7.0000	1.88509	2.00	7.00
District 10	6.0000	6.5000	1.30931	4.00	7.00
District 11	6.2500	7.0000	1.75255	2.00	7.00
District 12	4.8750	4.0000	1.88509	2.00	7.00
District 13	4.6250	4.0000	1.84681	2.00	7.00
District 14	5.2500	6.0000	1.98206	2.00	7.00
District 15	6.8750	7.0000	.35355	6.00	7.00

**ECRS-R Scale 2**

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
District 1	5.4000	7.0000	2.30217	2.00	7.00
District 2	6.8000	7.0000	.44721	6.00	7.00
District 3	6.6000	7.0000	.54772	6.00	7.00
District 4	6.0000	6.0000	1.22474	4.00	7.00
District 5	5.8000	7.0000	2.16795	2.00	7.00
District 6	6.8000	7.0000	.44721	6.00	7.00
District 7	6.0000	6.0000	1.00000	5.00	7.00
District 8	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00
District 9	5.8000	7.0000	2.16795	2.00	7.00
District 10	6.8000	7.0000	.44721	6.00	7.00
District 11	6.4000	7.0000	1.34164	4.00	7.00
District 12	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00
District 13	5.0000	5.0000	2.12132	2.00	7.00
District 14	6.4000	7.0000	.89443	5.00	7.00
District 15	6.8000	7.0000	.44721	6.00	7.00

### ECRS-R Scale 3

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
District 1	6.2500	7.0000	1.50000	4.00	7.00
District 2	6.0000	6.5000	1.41421	4.00	7.00
District 3	6.2500	7.0000	1.50000	4.00	7.00
District 4	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00
District 5	6.2500	7.0000	1.50000	4.00	7.00
District 6	6.0000	6.5000	1.41421	4.00	7.00
District 7	5.7500	6.0000	1.25831	4.00	7.00
District 8	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00
District 9	6.2500	7.0000	1.50000	4.00	7.00
District 10	6.2500	7.0000	1.50000	4.00	7.00
District 11	6.2500	7.0000	1.50000	4.00	7.00
District 12	6.2500	7.0000	1.50000	4.00	7.00
District 13	6.2500	7.0000	1.50000	4.00	7.00
District 14	6.2500	7.0000	1.50000	4.00	7.00
District 15	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00

### ECRS-R Scale 4

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
District 1	4.5000	4.0000	1.35401	3.00	7.00
District 2	4.6000	4.0000	1.26491	4.00	7.00
District 3	4.1000	4.0000	1.52388	2.00	7.00
District 4	4.8000	4.0000	1.13529	4.00	7.00
District 5	6.1000	7.0000	1.72884	2.00	7.00
District 6	4.8000	4.0000	1.31656	4.00	7.00
District 7	3.8286	4.0000	1.45031	2.00	6.29
District 8	6.5000	7.0000	1.26930	3.00	7.00
District 9	4.7000	4.0000	1.41814	3.00	7.00
District 10	4.1000	4.0000	1.19722	2.00	7.00
District 11	6.6000	7.0000	.96609	4.00	7.00
District 12	4.7000	4.0000	1.25167	4.00	7.00
District 13	3.8000	4.0000	1.03280	2.00	6.00
District 14	4.9000	4.0000	1.44914	3.00	7.00
District 15	6.8000	7.0000	.42164	6.00	7.00

**ECRS-R Scale 5**

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
District 1	6.8000	7.0000	.44721	6.00	7.00
District 2	6.8000	7.0000	.44721	6.00	7.00
District 3	6.4000	7.0000	.89443	5.00	7.00
District 4	6.6000	7.0000	.89443	5.00	7.00
District 5	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00
District 6	6.8000	7.0000	.44721	6.00	7.00
District 7	6.8000	7.0000	.44721	6.00	7.00
District 8	6.8000	7.0000	.44721	6.00	7.00
District 9	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00
District 10	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00
District 11	6.8000	7.0000	.44721	6.00	7.00
District 12	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00
District 13	6.6000	7.0000	.89443	5.00	7.00
District 14	6.8000	7.0000	.44721	6.00	7.00
District 15	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00

**ECRS-R Scale 6**

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
District 1	5.4318	5.3636	1.65707	4.00	7.00
District 2	6.7500	7.0000	.50000	6.00	7.00
District 3	5.0000	5.5000	2.44949	2.00	7.00
District 4	5.5000	5.5000	1.73205	4.00	7.00
District 5	6.7500	7.0000	.50000	6.00	7.00
District 6	6.9318	7.0000	.13636	6.73	7.00
District 7	5.5000	5.5000	1.73205	4.00	7.00
District 8	5.5000	6.5000	2.38048	2.00	7.00
District 9	5.2500	5.0000	1.50000	4.00	7.00
District 10	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00
District 11	4.5000	4.5000	2.88675	2.00	7.00
District 12	5.5000	5.5000	1.73205	4.00	7.00
District 13	4.9318	5.3636	2.37802	2.00	7.00
District 14	6.7500	7.0000	.50000	6.00	7.00
District 15	6.9318	7.0000	.13636	6.73	7.00

**ECRS-R Scale 7**

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
District 1	6.8333	7.0000	.40825	6.00	7.00
District 2	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00
District 3	5.6667	6.0000	1.36626	4.00	7.00
District 4	6.8333	7.0000	.40825	6.00	7.00
District 5	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00
District 6	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00
District 7	4.5000	4.0000	1.76068	2.00	7.00
District 8	5.1667	5.5000	2.13698	2.00	7.00
District 9	6.3333	7.0000	1.21106	4.00	7.00
District 10	6.1667	7.0000	2.04124	2.00	7.00
District 11	7.0000	7.0000	.00000	7.00	7.00
District 12	6.8333	7.0000	.40825	6.00	7.00
District 13	6.3333	7.0000	1.21106	4.00	7.00
District 14	6.8333	7.0000	.40825	6.00	7.00
District 15	6.0000	7.0000	1.54919	4.00	7.00

**ECRS-R Total Scale**

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
District 1	5.6602	7.0000	1.64301	2.00	7.00
District 2	6.0238	7.0000	1.33413	4.00	7.00
District 3	5.3095	6.0000	1.67460	2.00	7.00
District 4	5.7857	7.0000	1.49039	2.00	7.00
District 5	6.2381	7.0000	1.70808	1.00	7.00
District 6	5.9697	7.0000	1.43553	2.00	7.00
District 7	4.9354	4.5000	1.77707	1.00	7.00
District 8	6.3095	7.0000	1.50589	2.00	7.00
District 9	5.7619	7.0000	1.60502	2.00	7.00
District 10	5.9048	7.0000	1.57433	2.00	7.00
District 11	6.3571	7.0000	1.46206	2.00	7.00
District 12	5.8095	7.0000	1.53397	2.00	7.00
District 13	5.1364	5.0000	1.78204	2.00	7.00
District 14	5.9524	7.0000	1.44749	2.00	7.00
District 15	6.7554	7.0000	.69074	4.00	7.00

**TSRS Scale 1**

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
District 1	4.0000	4.0000	1.52753	2.00	6.00
District 2	3.8571	4.0000	1.95180	1.00	6.00
District 3	4.8571	5.0000	1.34519	3.00	7.00
District 4	3.5714	4.0000	.97590	2.00	5.00
District 5	4.1429	5.0000	1.86445	1.00	6.00
District 6	4.6429	5.0000	1.65112	1.50	6.50
District 7	4.1429	4.0000	.89974	3.00	5.00
District 8	4.7143	4.5000	1.28638	3.50	6.50
District 9	3.8571	4.0000	1.06904	2.00	5.00
District 10	4.0000	5.0000	2.64575	1.00	7.00
District 11	4.4286	5.0000	2.14920	1.00	7.00
District 12	3.2857	4.0000	2.21467	1.00	6.00
District 13	4.7143	6.0000	1.97605	1.00	6.00
District 14	4.7857	5.0000	1.41000	2.00	6.00
District 15	4.2857	6.0000	2.56348	1.00	7.00

**TSRS Scale 2**

	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
District 1	4.4615	5.0000	.77625	3.00	5.00
District 2	4.3077	4.0000	.75107	3.00	5.00
District 3	4.9231	5.0000	.27735	4.00	5.00
District 4	4.4615	5.0000	.87706	3.00	5.00
District 5	4.1538	4.0000	.89872	3.00	5.00
District 6	4.6923	5.0000	.63043	3.00	5.00
District 7	4.3681	5.0000	.87559	3.00	5.00
District 8	4.7692	5.0000	.59914	3.00	5.00
District 9	4.8462	5.0000	.55470	3.00	5.00
District 10	4.5385	5.0000	.62788	3.00	5.00
District 11	4.4615	5.0000	.66023	3.00	5.00
District 12	4.6154	5.0000	.76795	3.00	5.00
District 13	4.8846	5.0000	.21926	4.50	5.00
District 14	4.3462	5.0000	.94394	3.00	5.00
District 15	4.4615	5.0000	.66023	3.00	5.00

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Interview Questions Asked of Teachers and Coordinators**

## **Teacher Interview Questions**

### **Basic Information**

Do you teach

A morning-only class?

An afternoon-only class?

A full day class?

Number of children in your classroom(s):

### **Overall Goals and Program Qualities**

- What are the goals of your child development program for children?
- How do you think that your program is helping to prepare children for kindergarten and elementary school?
- How would you expand or enhance your program if you could?
- Are there any significant barriers to meeting your preschool program goals? (Please elaborate.)

### **Recruitment**

- How many of the children in your classroom are high-risk? If not all, please explain.
- How do you recruit high-risk children into your program?
- How do you determine children's high-risk status prior to enrollment?
- Are there high-risk children and families that you would like to enroll but have been unable to? What were the problems with enrollment of those high-risk children and families?
- As a teacher, do you have any ideas about how you could improve recruitment and retention of high risk children?

### **Curriculum**

- What curriculum do you use? Are there any plans to change or modify it?
- How was the decision made to use this curriculum?
- How satisfied are you with your curriculum?
- How do you plan for the development of children's emerging literacy and numeracy skills? (pre-academic readiness skills)
- Do you use the South Carolina pre-K language arts standards as you plan your curriculum? If so, how do you use them?
- Do you use the South Carolina pre-K mathematics standards as you plan your curriculum? If so, how do you use them?



### **Assessment**

- How do you assess individual child progress?
- How do you go about reviewing and using results of child assessments?
- How do you assess the implementation of your curriculum? (To see that you are doing what the curriculum specifies.)
- How do you use assessments to decide on changes you would like to make in your classroom ?
- What kinds of assistance would be helpful to you as a teacher to improve your assessment practices?

### **Parent programs:**

Are you responsible for implementing or supporting parenting and family literacy programs?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

### **IF YES,**

- What strategies do you use to recruit parents of at-risk preschoolers to participate in parenting and family literacy programs?
- Please describe the parenting or family literacy programs that you provide to parents of at-risk preschoolers.
- In your opinion, how effective are the parenting and family literacy programs in your school district in recruiting parents of at-risk preschoolers?
- What kinds of assistance would be helpful to you as a teacher to improve your parent programs?

### **IF NO,**

- How much knowledge do you have concerning the parenting or family literacy programs for your students' families?

**If the respondent has some knowledge of the parenting or family literacy programs, then ask the following additional questions:**

According to your knowledge of the parenting and family literacy programs, please describe the parenting or family literacy programs that are provided to parents of at-risk four-year-olds who are enrolled in your early childhood class(es).

- How effective are these parenting and family literacy programs at recruiting parents of at-risk preschoolers into them?

### **END:**

Is there anything we missed that it would be important for us to know?

## **Coordinator Interview Questions**

### **Basic Information**

- What is your primary role? What other roles do you have?
- How long have you coordinated this program?

### **Overall Goals and Program Qualities**

- What are the goals of your child development program for children?
- How do you think that your program is helping to prepare children for kindergarten and later elementary school?
- How would you expand or enhance your program if you could?
- Are there any significant barriers to meeting your preschool program goals? (Please elaborate.)

### **Recruitment**

- How many of the children in your program are high-risk? If not all, please explain.
- How do you determine children's high-risk status prior to enrollment?
- How do you recruit high-risk children into your program?
- Are there high-risk children and families that you would like to enroll but have been unable to? What were the problems with enrollment of those high-risk children and families?
- As a program coordinator, what are your ideas about how you could improve recruitment and retention of high-risk children?

### **Curriculum**

- Do all your classrooms use the same curriculum?

**If yes, ask the following questions.**

**If there is more than one curriculum for each, ask the following questions for each curriculum.**

- What curriculum do you use? Are there any plans to change or modify it?
- How was the decision made to use this curriculum?
- How satisfied are you with your curriculum?

- How do you plan for the development of children's emerging literacy and numeracy skills? (pre-academic readiness skills)
- Do you use the South Carolina pre-K language arts standards as you plan your curriculum? If so, how do you use them?
- Do you use the South Carolina pre-K mathematics standards as you plan your curriculum? If so, how do you use them?

### **Assessment**

- How do you assess individual child progress?
- How do you go about reviewing and using results of child assessments?
- How do you assess the implementation of your curriculum? (To see that you are doing what the curriculum specifies.)
- How do you use assessments to decide on changes you would like to make in your program?
- Do you have any ideas on how to improve your child assessments?
- What kinds of assistance would be helpful for your teachers to improve their assessment practices?

### **Parent programs:**

Are you also responsible for coordinating parenting and/or family literacy programs?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

### **IF YES,**

- What strategies do you use to recruit parents of at-risk preschoolers to participate in parenting or family literacy programs?
- How do you coordinate your efforts with other programs?
- With which of the following programs do you coordinate your efforts? (Indicate all that apply.)
- Adult Education \_\_\_\_\_
- First Steps \_\_\_\_\_
- Head Start \_\_\_\_\_
- Title I Parenting Programs \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please name and explain)

- Please describe the parenting or family literacy programs that you provide.
- Do you know how your parenting or family literacy programs are funded?  
If yes, what is/are the source of funds: (Please indicate all that apply.)

Education Improvement Act Funds \_\_\_\_\_

First Steps \_\_\_\_\_

Other State Funds \_\_\_\_\_

Local Funds \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Funds \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please name and explain)

- How effective are your parenting and family literacy programs at recruiting parents of at-risk preschoolers?
- Do you have any suggestions on how to improve parenting and family literacy programs?

**IF NO,**

- Who is the person in charge of administering parenting and/or family literacy programs in your school district?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Please describe how you work with the person who coordinates parenting and family literacy programs for parents of at-risk preschoolers served in your district.
- How much knowledge do you have concerning the parenting or family literacy programs in your school district?

**If the respondent has some knowledge of the parenting and family literacy programs, then ask the following additional questions:**

- According to your knowledge of the parenting or family literacy programs, please describe the parenting or family literacy programs that are provided to parents of at-risk four-year-olds who are enrolled in early childhood programs in your district.
- In your opinion, how effective are the parenting and family literacy programs in your school district in recruiting parents of at-risk preschoolers?

**Coordination and collaboration with other agencies**

- Could you name agencies you coordinate and collaborate with? Please describe what you do. (Examples could be social services, medical providers.)
- Are there factors that hinder your ability to coordinate with other community agencies?

**END:**

Is there anything we missed that it would be important for us to know?